

ABSTRACT

Viscoelastic surfactant based aqueous fluid systems useful as thickening agents in various applications, e.g. to suspend particles produced during the excavation of geologic formations. The surfactants are zwitterionic/amphoteric surfactants such as dihydroxyl alkyl
5 glycinate, alkyl amphoteric acetate or propionate, alkyl betaine, alkyl amidopropyl betaine and alkylimino mono- or di-propionates derived from certain waxes, fats and oils. The thickening agent is used in conjunction with an inorganic water-soluble salt or organic additive such as phthalic acid, salicylic acid or their salts.